



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

72-HOUR REPORT

22 MARCH 2021

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) Los Angeles – Iranian Nationals Charged with Conspiring to Evade US Sanctions

(U) Ten Iranian nationals were charged with running a nearly 20-year-long scheme to evade US sanctions on the Government of Iran by disguising more than \$300 million worth of transactions. The transactions, one including the purchase of two \$25 million oil tankers, were on Iran's behalf through front companies in the San Fernando Valley, Canada, Hong Kong, and the United Arab Emirates. If convicted, the defendants could face a maximum sentence of 20-years. A forfeiture complaint was also filed seeking a money laundering penalty of more than \$157 million dollars.

SOURCE: 19 March 2021, [US DOJ](#)

(U) Simi Valley – Man Suspected of Delivering Heroin via Drone

(U) Police in Southern California are investigating whether a suspected drug dealer used a drone to deliver heroin to customers. The suspect was arrested in Simi Valley as narcotics detectives were investigating possible heroin and methamphetamine sales in the city northwest of Los Angeles. At the time of the arrest, the suspect was operating the drone and detectives later discovered heroin attached to the device. The suspect could face charges including felony possession of drugs for sale.

SOURCE: 22 March 2021, [NBC Los Angeles](#)

(U) SOUTHWEST BORDER

(U) California – Nearly 1,000 Children Held by US Border Patrol for More Than 10-Days

(U) San Ysidro – An internal Department of Homeland Security document advises that 823 unaccompanied migrant children have been held in US border patrol custody for over 10 days, more than a fourfold increase over the past week. The maximum amount of time a child is to be held legally is 72-hours under normal conditions. As of Saturday, 3,314 unaccompanied children had been in custody longer than the 72-hour legal statute, with 2,226 for more than 5-days and 823 for more than 10-days. The administration advised that CBP facilities are no place for children and that officials are working around the clock to transfer children to shelters and the homes of relatives.

SOURCE: 21 March 2021, [Axios](#)

(U) Mexico – Mexico Launches Crackdown on Migrant Smuggling at its Southern Border

(U) Chiapas – Mexico sent hundreds of immigration agents, police, and National Guard officers marching through the streets of the capital of the southern state of Chiapas to launch an operation to crack down on migrant smuggling. The operation came one day after Mexico announced it was banning entry for nonessential travel on its southern border with Guatemala to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Mexico staged a similar, but smaller, show-of-force last year to discourage migrant caravans from trying to enter from Central Mexico.

SOURCE: 20 March 2021, [Border Report](#)

(U) Mexico – Thirteen Mexican Police Officers, Investigators Reportedly Killed in Ambush

(U) Coatepec Harinas – Thirteen Mexican police officers and investigators were killed in an ambush as

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they travelled through a rural region outside of Mexico City. The incident is the latest attack on law enforcement by criminal groups, as such attacks have become routine in Mexico. At least 524 Mexican police officers were killed in 2020 with a recent intelligence report from the state government identifying 26 criminal groups operating in the state.

SOURCE: 18 March 2021, [The Guardian](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) District of Columbia – Iran Threatens US Army Post and Top Generals

(U) Washington – Iran made threats against Fort McNair, an Army post in the US capital, and against the Army's vice chief of staff. Based on intercepted communications by the National Security Agency (NSA) in January, the US discovered that Iran's Revolutionary Guard discussed mounting "USS Cole-style attacks" against the Army Post, referring to the October 2000 suicide attack in which a small boat pulled up alongside a Navy vessel and exploded, killing 17 sailors. The intelligence also revealed threats to kill a top General and plans to infiltrate and surveil the Fort McNair military base.

SOURCE: 21 March 2021, [Associated Press](#)

(U) District of Columbia – Pentagon Looks to Root Out Extremists Targeting US Troops

(U) Washington – The US military is focusing on identifying extremist organizations in the United States that are trying to recruit members from within the US armed forces. The Defense Department is talking with federal law enforcement agencies as they develop databases on domestic extremist groups, in the wake of the 6 January riot at the US Capitol. Military leaders are intent on developing training for troops that makes clear they should not get involved with such groups. A recent Pentagon report noted that members of the military "are highly prized by extremist groups as they bring legitimacy to their causes."

SOURCE: 18 March 2021, [Associated Press](#)

(U) District of Columbia – Four Men Linked to Proud Boys Charged in Plot to Attack Capitol

(U) Washington – Four men described as leaders of the far right Proud Boys have been charged in the US Capitol riots, as an unsealed indictment presents evidence on how federal officials believe group members planned and carried out a coordinated attack to stop Congress from certifying the election results. Prosecutors advised the Proud Boys arranged for members to communicate using specific frequencies to carry out the attack.

SOURCE: 19 March 2021, [US News](#)

(U) Florida – Suspected Smugglers Among 16 Captured on Boat off Palm Beach County

(U) West Palm Beach – A 29-foot boat with 16 people aboard was intercepted about five-miles off West Palm Beach in a suspected human smuggling operation. The boat was intercepted by the US Coast Guard and took multiple individuals from several countries into custody. The captain and some of the passengers were brought ashore, questioned, and could face multiple charges. Since 1 October 2020, the total number of migrants interdicted in the area has increased significantly from the previous year.

SOURCE: 20 March 2021, [Orlando Sentinel](#)

(U) Michigan – Suspect Arrested after 8 People Stabbed at Detroit Hookah Lounge

(U) Detroit – Authorities in Detroit arrested a suspect for stabbing eight people during a fight that started inside a hookah lounge and continued into the parking lot. The eight victims were hospitalized, but none sustained fatal injuries. Detroit authorities arrested the suspects after investigators located him at a local hospital with injuries sustained during the altercation. The suspect's injuries were also non-life-threatening, and he has been formally charged in connection with the stabbings.

SOURCE: 21 March 2021, [CNN](#)

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(U) Washington – Hacker Connected to Massive Surveillance Camera Breach Indicted

(U) Seattle – The Justice Department brought charges this week against a Swiss individual allegedly responsible for hacking into dozens of companies over the course of several years, most recently allegedly carrying out a breach that exposed massive amounts of surveillance data. The suspect, who masterminded the recent Verkada hack leading to the illegal access of 150,000 surveillance cameras, faces multiple counts of wire fraud, identity theft, and computer fraud.

SOURCE: 19 March 2021, [The Hill](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) Finland – Chinese Nation State Hackers Linked to Finnish Parliament Spying Attack

(U) Helsinki – Finland's domestic security agency has attributed a cyberespionage attack on the information systems of the Nordic country's parliament to the cyber group APT31, which is generally linked to the Chinese government by cybersecurity firms. Finland's National Bureau of Investigation started an investigation into suspected gross hacking and espionage attacks on the information systems of the Finnish legislature.

SOURCE: 18 March 2021, [ABC News](#)

(U) Mozambique – US Deploys Green Berets to Defeat ISIS-linked Insurgents in Southern Africa

(U) Cabo Delgado – The US Army Special Forces have been deployed to help defeat Islamic State in Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) affiliated insurgents in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique accused of beheading children as young as 11. The soldiers will train Mozambican marines for the next two-months to counter the rapidly escalating insurgency from the terrorist group al-Shabaab, which shares its name with a different al-Qa'ida aligned terror organization in Somalia. The deployment comes after the US officially listed the group as a foreign terrorist organization last week because of its links to ISIS.

SOURCE: 20 March 2021, [Yahoo News](#)

(U) Niger – Twenty-two Killed in Village Attacks

(U) Niamey – Armed men killed at least 22 civilians in southwestern Niger less-than-a week after unidentified assailants killed 58 villagers in the same region. The attackers raided three villages in the region as security forces advised ISIS fighters were responsible. The ISIS's local affiliate is active in the area and has been blamed for previous attacks that killed dozens of civilians and soldiers. The violence is part of a wider security crisis across West Africa's Sahel region.

SOURCE: 21 March 2021, [Reuters](#)

(U) Saudi Arabia – Yemeni Rebels Attack Aramco Refinery in Saudi Capital

(U) Riyadh – Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels attacked an Aramco refinery in the Saudi capital of Riyadh using six bomb-laden drones, stepping up their offensive on the kingdom's energy and security installations. The attack caused a fire that was later controlled with no impact on oil supplies or derivatives. No casualties were reported. Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia have increased in frequency in recent months as they seek an end to Saudi airstrikes and blockades in and around Yemen.

SOURCE: 19 March 2021, [Bloomberg](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

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